



OKANAGAN LAKE

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WATCH: Mussels almost make their way into Okanagan Lake



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Anchor/Reporter/Web Producer



OSOYOOS — A close call for Okanagan Lake after Canada Customs Officials found what appeared to be zebra or quagga mussels on a boat trying to cross the border into Osoyoos.

It happened on March. 12 after a commercial transporter carrying the large pleasure craft attempted to make its way from the U.S. into Canada. The boat originated from Texas and was heading to be mooraged in Okanagan Lake.

“Of concern to the Okanagan is the impact these mussels could have on our water quality, ecosystems and economy – estimated by the OBWB at \$40 million a year to just manage,” said Okanagan Water Basin Board Communications Director Corrine Jackson.

But if not for the cooperation of the commercial carrier, officials wouldn’t have been able to stop the ship. The Canadian Border Services Agency currently has no legislative authority to refuse entry.

“The Okanagan Basin Water Board has been urging the federal government to pass legislation, that is pending, that will allow border guards to stop and inspect watercraft and prohibit entry of contaminated vessels,” said Jackson. “It has also been urging the Province to follow-up on its legislation (introduced in Dec. 2012 which makes it illegal to transport live or dead invasive mussels in B.C.) and implement a B.C. inspection program that will help prevent the spread of these mussels and other invasive species.”

Conservation officers were brought in to decontaminate the vessel the following day.